

Message Text

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INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 /001 W

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O 091136Z MAR 78

FM AMEMBASSY AMMAN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 5369

S E C R E T AMMAN 2284

NODIS

E.O.11652: XGDS-1

TAGS: PEPR, PGOV, JO, US, XF

SUBJECT: COURT CHIEF SHARAF - JORDAN AND NEGOTIATIONS

REF: AMMAN 2278

SUMMARY: IN FOLLOW UP TALK TO MY CONVERSATION WITH KING MARCH 8 REQUESTED BY SHARAF, HE INDICATED THAT JORDAN CONTINUED TO FEEL THAT US ROLE PARAMOUNT IN BRINGING ISRAELIS ALONG. HE IS CONSIDERABLY LESS PESSIMISTIC THAN HUSSEIN. HE ALSO UNDERSTANDS NEED FOR JORDAN TO AVOID ARTICULATING TOUGH PRECONDITIONS TO NEGOTIATIONS HOWEVER CLEAR CUT AND TOUGH THEIR NEGOTIATING POSITION MIGHT BE. HE SAID KING ASKED HIM TO BEGIN PREPARING A LETTER FOR PRESIDENT CARTER AND HE TOLD ME THAT HE WOULD EMPHASIZE IN IT JORDAN'S CONTINUING INTEREST IN NEGOTIATIONS AND WILLINGNESS TO TAKE RISKS AS WELL AS KING'S FEELINGS ABOUT GROWING DANGERS IN THE REGION TO JORDAN AND NEED FOR US TO PLAY AN ACTIVE ROLE IN BRINGING ISRAELIS ALONG ON WITHDRAWALS ON WEST BANK AND SELF DETERMINATION IN SOME FORM FOR PALESTINIANS. HE AGREES THAT INDEPENDENT PLO STATE NOT SOMETHING DESIRED BY KING, BUT NEITHER IS FURTHER RADICALIZATION OF PALESTINIANS THROUGH UNFAIR TREATMENT OF THEM IN THE PEACE PROCESS. END SUMMARY.

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1. SHARAF ASKED ME TO MEET WITH HIM MARCH 9 TO FOLLOW UP MY TALK WITH KING DAY BEFORE. HE BEGAN CONVERSATION BY SAYING THAT KING'S INTERVIEW WITH AUSTRIAN PRESS WHICH I HAD RAISED WITH HIM WAS DESIGNED PRIMARILY TO BRING TO OUR ATTENTION FACT THAT JORDANIANS FELT WE COULD NO LONGER PLAY UNOBTRUSIVE MIDDLE MAN ROLE IN NEGOTIATIONS. THEY FELT STRONGLY THAT WE SHOULD BEGIN TO TRY TO MOVE THE ISRAELIS ON KEY ISSUES AND

THAT SAYING IT PUBLICLY AS WELL AS PRIVATELY MADE THEIR POSITION THAT MUCH MORE CLEAR AND FORCEFUL AS FAR AS THE US WAS CONCERNED. I SAID THAT WE HAD GOTTEN THE MESSAGE, BUT THAT I WAS CONCERNED ABOUT SEVERAL THINGS. I DID NOT WANT TO SEE OUR ABILITY TO COMMUNICATE, OUR DIALOGUE AS FRIENDS IMPAIRED BY PRESS STATEMENTS; NEITHER DID I WANT TO SEE KING'S WELL-KNOWN MODERATION AND INTEREST IN PEACE BECOME TRANSMUTED INTO HARD LINE STATEMENTS AND PRECONDITIONS FOR NEGOTIATIONS. IF THAT HAPPENED, THEN THE BURDEN OF ACTUALLY HOLDING UP THE PEACE PROCESS COULD REALLY SHIFT TO JORDAN. I HOPED JORDAN WOULD CONTINUE TO KEEP ITS EYE ON ITS TRADITIONAL POLICIES OF HELPING ALONG THE NEGOTIATING PROCESS.

2. SHARAF SAID THAT HE FELT THE SAME WAY. HE HAD JUST FINISHED BRIEFING AN INNER CABINET FOREIGN POLICY GROUP WITH WHICH HE KEPT IN CLOSE TOUCH ABOUT THE PROBLEM ALONG THE SAME LINES. THEY TOO HAD AGREED WITH THIS LINE OF THOUGHT. HE SAID JORDAN WILL CONTINUE TO EMPHASIS ITS NEGOTIATING POSITION, BUT LEFT ME WITH THE IDEA THAT IT WILL GO EASY FROM NOW ON THE KIND OF PRECONDITIONS IT WILL ARTICULATE IN PUBLIC WITH REGARD TO JOINING IN THE NEGOTIATIONS. SHARAF FREELY CONFIRMED THAT THE KING IS WILLING TO TAKE RISKS IN THE NEGOTIATIONS AND TO ACCEPT THE PROBLEMS WHICH WILL RESULT AND THAT HIS POSTURE AT PRESENT IS STILL PREDICATED ON THAT BASIC ORIENTATION. (COMMENT: WE WILL HAVE TO WAIT AND SEE WHAT SHARAF CAN DELIVER ON THE PUBLIC LINE. SYRIAN PRESSURE IS CLEARLY ON JORDAN AS WELL AS CONSIDERABLE
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DOMESTIC FEELING. FORMER CAN BE FINESSED AND MINIMIZED, FOR A TIME, BUT IN ABSENCE OF REAL ISRAELI MOVEMENT STRONG PUBLIC FEELING HERE WILL CONTINUE TO GENERATE PRESSURES FOR HARD STATEMENTS). HOWEVER, SHARAF DID SEE DANGER OF BOXING THEMSELVES IN UNNECESSARILY AND ALSO RELIEVING SOME OF THE PRESSURE ON BEGIN BY TAKING CONTINUING HARD LINE. SHARAF CONFIRMED THAT JORDAN DOES NOT WANT INDEPENDENT PLO STATE IN WEST BANK, BUT NEITHER DOES IT WANT TO RADICALIZE PALESTINIANS BY TREATING THEM UNFAIRLY OR CAVALIERLY IN THE PEACE PROCESS.

3. SHARAF POINTED OUT THAT KING WANTED TO SEND THE PRESIDENT A LETTER SETTING FORTH HIS IDEAS AND ASSESSMENTS BEFORE THE BEGIN VISIT. HE WENT OVER WITH ME IN GENERAL THE POINTS HE THOUGHT KING SHOULD MAKE, CENTERING AROUND: (A) KING'S CONTINUING COMMITMENT TO PEACE AND DESIRE TO PARTICIPATE; (B) GROWING DANGERS JORDAN FELT FOR ITS OWN SECURITY IN THE AREA; AND (C) BEGIN'S CREATION OF STUMBLING BLOCKS TO PEACE AND JORDAN'S HOPE THAT THE US WOULD GET BEGIN TO MOVE ON KEY POINTS. I TOLD SHARAF THAT I WAS IN A DIFFICULT POSITION COMMENTING ON A LETTER THAT KING HUSSEIN WISHED TO SEND TO PRESIDENT CARTER. I FELT THAT POINTS HE RAISED WERE ENOUGH ON KING'S MIND FROM MY TALK WITH HIM YESTERDAY TO BE PUT INTO ANY COMMUNICATION TO THE

PRESIDENT AND I URGED TAKING THE MOST POSITIVE TONE AND TREATMENT POSSIBLE. KING SHOULD EMPHASIZE HIS WILLINGNESS TO NEGOTIATE AND ALSO IF POSSIBLE POINT OUT THAT HE WAS NOT TRYING TO SET PRECONDITIONS FOR PARTICIPATION. SHARAF SAID HE AGREED AND WOULD BE DRAFTING THE LETTER FOR THE KING TO REVIEW AND REWORK.

4. COMMENT: UNDER CIRCUMSTANCES WHERE HUSSEIN SEEMS TO FEEL SO STRONGLY ABOUT DEVELOPMENTS AND OUR ROLE, I FELT IT BEST TO ENCOURAGE HIM TO GET IT OFF HIS CHEST. IT WILL ALSO BE USEFUL IF SHARAF CAN GET KING TO INTRODUCE INTO ANY LETTER SOME ELEMENTS OF OPENNESS AND FLEXIBILITY IN KING'S POSTURE TOWARD JOINING THE PEACE PROCESS.

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5. RECOMMEND DEPARTMENT REPEAT TO ATHERTON DELEGATION, TEL AVIV AND CAIRO.
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: POLITICAL SETTLEMENT, WEST BANK, GAZA, DIPLOMATIC DISCUSSIONS, NEGOTIATIONS, PEACE PLANS, MUTUAL FORCE REDUCTIONS, SELFDETERMINATION, CAT-B
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 09 mar 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978AMMAN02284
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: X1
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: P850101-1520, N780003-0368
Format: TEL
From: AMMAN
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
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Line Count: 139
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
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Office: ACTION NODS
Original Classification: SECRET
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: NODIS
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: SECRET
Previous Handling Restrictions: NODIS
Reference: 78 AMMAN 2278
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 20 jun 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 3396600
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: COURT CHIEF SHARAF - JORDAN AND NEGOTIATIONS
TAGS: PEPR, PGOV, JO, US, XF, (HUSAYN), (SHARAF)
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvkey: odb://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/87e20fcb-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014